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February 21, 1963

Dear Congressman Mahon:

I understand that when the Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, John A. McCone, appeared before your Subcommittee on February 6, 1963, members of the Committee raised questions as to the accuracy of statements I had made before the House Select Committee on Export Control on October 3, 1962, with respect to Soviet military equipment and missiles in Cuba.

It is my understanding that members of the Committee particularly questioned the estimates I had submitted as to the military equipment delivered to Cuba in the period between July and October, 1962.

I should like the Committee to understand the basis for these estimates.

When I was invited to testify before the Select Committee, I asked the Bureau of Intelligence and Research in the Department of State to assemble for my use, among other materials, an up-to-date summary of intelligence community estimates bearing on the Soviet buildup in Cuba.

In

The Honorable

George H. Mahon,

House of Representatives.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDG/AR

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In response to my request, on October 2, 1962--the day before my testimony--the Bureau of Intelligence and Research prepared an inventory of Soviet equipment in Cuba from materials supplied by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency. The Director of the Bureau, Mr. Roger Hilson, telephoned the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Mr. John McCone, read him the inventory of Soviet military equipment in Cuba and obtained his approval of the inclusion of that inventory as part of my statement.

A copy of Mr. Hilson's memorandum to me containing the inventory is attached. All of the estimates in that memorandum were incorporated in the prepared statement that I read to the Select Committee--with the exception of the information contained in the last two paragraphs. This information related to the time required to train Cuban personnel to man the SAM sites and the existence of other equipment believed to be electronic gear. It was omitted only because it did not seem relevant.

In retrospect, it is clear that the estimates made available to me--and which I presented to the Kitchin Committee--understated the full dimensions and character of the weapons buildup. However, those estimates did reflect the situation as seen by the intelligence community before photographic proof was obtained on October 14 that there were MRBM sites in Cuba.

I would appreciate your bringing this letter to the attention of the Committee Members and inserting it in the Record.

Sincerely yours,

Enclosure:

As stated.

U: GMB/vh George W. Ball
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